

Eileen Collins honored with Society of Women Engineers' Resnik Challenger Medal

By Joanne Hale

Astronaut Eileen Collins recently received the 2003 Society of Women Engineers' (SWE) Resnik Challenger Medal in recognition of her visionary contributions to space exploration and her extraordinary leadership and flight skills.

Collins said that receiving the award was "a real honor" and that SWE and the space program share similar goals when it comes to education.

"I believe one of the goals of the SWE is to inspire and recruit young women into engineering fields," Collins said, adding that "the space program is a great way to inspire young people to get into engineering as well as science and math."

SWE, founded in 1950, is a nonprofit educational and service organization that focuses on establishing engineering as a highly desirable career field for women. SWE also recognizes women's contributions and achievements as engineers and leaders.

The Resnik Medal, named after Astronaut Judy Resnik who died in the 1986 *Challenger* accident, was formally presented to Collins Oct. 10 at the SWE National Achievement Awards banquet in Birmingham, Ala. Collins could not attend in person but accepted the award in a videotaped speech.

Collins became the first woman to pilot a Shuttle mission in 1995 aboard STS-63 and also the first woman Shuttle commander in 1999 aboard STS-93. As a real-life space explorer, she inspires young people around the world. However, she credits more down-to-earth leaders with keeping kids – especially girls – interested in science, math and engineering.

"Young women shy away from those fields – whether or not it is due to peer pressure or society expectations," she said. "I would like to get a message out to parents and teachers: You are the ones that need to tell young people 'yes, you can do it.'"

Collins said that her own parents and teachers were her role models as she grew up, along with the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II and the first group of women Mission Specialists selected by NASA in 1978.

Collins herself was selected by NASA in 1990 after graduation as class leader from the Air Force Test Pilot Training School at Edwards Air Force Base.

"Thousands of today's young women have been inspired by Colonel Collins," SWE president Alma Martinez Fallon said. "Colonel Collins' influence and encouragement in getting students, especially girls, involved in math and science is vital to addressing our country's essential need for a growing and diverse technical workforce."

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE

Collins observes training activities of her STS-114 crewmates from the simulation control area in the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL).

Jsc2002-e-23144 Photo by James Blair

Collins, STS-93 Commander, checks on an experiment on *Columbia's* middeck on July 23, 1999. This Shuttle mission was the first to be commanded by a woman.

s93-e-5016

Collins dons a training version of the Shuttle launch and entry suit prior to the start of an STS-114 training session in the NBL. She will serve as Commander of STS-114, the first post-*Columbia* Shuttle flight.

Jsc2002-00842 Photo by James Blair



SPACE CENTER

Roundup

The Roundup is an official publication of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas, and is published by the Public Affairs Office for all space center employees. The Roundup office is in Bldg. 2, Rm. 166A. The mail code is AP121. Visit our Web site at: www.jsc.nasa.gov/roundup/weekly/ For distribution questions or to suggest a story idea, please call 281/244-6397 or send an e-mail to roundup@ems.jsc.nasa.gov.

Melissa Davis Senior Editor

Joanne Hale Editor

Kendra Ceule Assistant Editor

Marshall Mellard Graphic Designer

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WEBSTER, TX
Permit No. G27